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BUILDING A BETTER SPYTRAP

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As Congress reconvened, high on the agenda of the intelligence oversight committees was the question of America's capability in the craft of counterintelligence.

Plainly put: "Are we any good at catching spies?"

The question is a real one. During recent months, the number of highly damaging incidents of Soviet espionage against the United States in third-party countries and at home have seriously compromised our national security. The impression is that the Soviet KGB and its satellite services are operating against us with a high degree of impunity.

That is not entirely accurate; but unfortunately the negative impression is strengthened by the necessity of keeping secret many of the facts surrounding cases of detected spies. It would be folly to let our enemies know precisely how and when their intelligence operations went wrong.

Still, the question of our counterintelligence effectiveness remains. Already intelligence aficionados have opened a heated debate as to

United States out of the intelligence business. This was a symbiotic relationship: the critics — centered in academia and the media — advanced their careers as self-appointed "experts" and advisers to Congress, and our elected officials obtained headlines.

This went on until they succeeded in gutting and demoralizing the FBI, CIA, and military intelligence agencies. Significantly, the anti-intelligence campaign focused on two areas: collection of information, especially by human sources, and counterintelligence.

President Reagan's director of Central Intelligence, William Casey, has begun the painstaking task of rebuilding U.S. intelligence-collection capability — against congressional opposition, leaks, innuendoes, and generally hostile national media. Now the critics of intelligence work are seeking to remake the counterintelligence function of the United States to their own liking. For this purpose they are utilizing the recent "rash" of spy cases and the threat of international terrorism.

This is not to suggest that U.S. counterintelligence programs do not need enhancement. They do; but this cannot be blamed only on the intelligence witch-hunts of the past decade. Former intelligence officers have conceded that the U.S. intelligence community provided mere lip service to the "discipline" of counterintelligence. Protecting the integrity of U.S. secrets was never a first priority.

The new batch of counterintelligence critics has proposed congressional chartering of a national counterintelligence directorate. This would provide them with certain advantages — the Congress would require a couple of new over-

sight subcommittees with budgets, chairmanships, staff positions to be filled, and consultancy positions for the academics. There is, of course, a problem. The concept of a centralized counterintelligence directorate is quite alien to the American tradition and goes against the trend of congressional and popular suspicion of any government agency that smacks of Orwellian "Big Brotherism."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been charged with the domestic counterintelligence function for half a century. The academic critics backing the "national counterintelligence agency" proposal view the FBI unfairly as a collection of ignorant, unsophisticated "cops"

who lack advanced university degrees and "therefore" lack the sophistication, understanding of the world, and the insight necessary to do a good counterintelligence job.

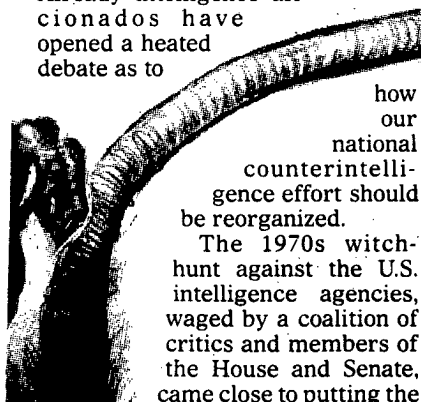
The buzz word among these critics is "multidisciplinary." It serves only to obscure the real function of counterintelligence:

- To determine what our enemies want their spies to find out about us;
- To determine what they intend to do to us or about us;
- To decide what we are going to do in response.

The truth is that the structures for the conduct and coordination of effective counterintelligence programs inside and outside the United States already are in place. What is needed is a policy decision by our leaders and those they have appointed to carry out policy in the CIA, FBI, and military services that counterintelligence will be elevated to the high level commensurate with its importance. Lip service no longer will do.

The art of counterintelligence must be given political and bureaucratic recognition equal to the other elements of intelligence. Those who become counterintelligence experts must be given the same career-advancement opportunities open to those in other intelligence fields.

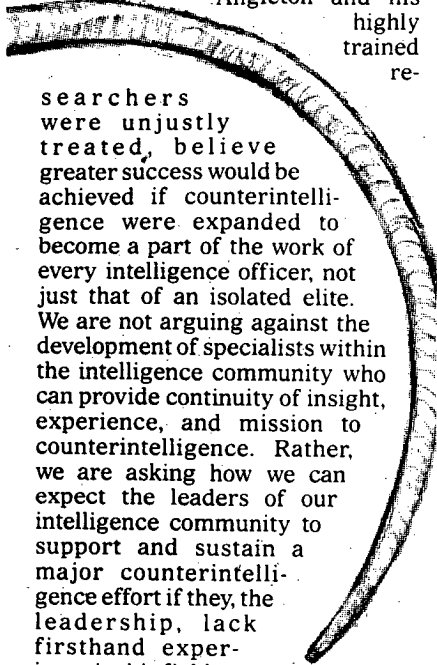
This is not to say that counterintelligence officers who do not measure up should be coddled. Intelligence veterans emphasize that there should be strict oversight of funds and manpower. Furthermore, the definitions of counterintelligence now vary widely among the various services. Often counterintelligence is confused with ordinary, commonsense security matters.

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how our national counterintelligence effort should be reorganized.

The 1970s witch-hunt against the U.S. intelligence agencies, waged by a coalition of critics and members of the House and Senate, came close to putting the

Constructive critics of the CIA's counterintelligence history, acknowledging that James J. Angleton and his highly trained re-



searchers were unjustly treated, believe greater success would be achieved if counterintelligence were expanded to become a part of the work of every intelligence officer, not just that of an isolated elite. We are not arguing against the development of specialists within the intelligence community who can provide continuity of insight, experience, and mission to counterintelligence. Rather, we are asking how we can expect the leaders of our intelligence community to support and sustain a major counterintelligence effort if they, the leadership, lack firsthand experience in this field.

Isolation and specialization of counterintelligence, a feature of the CIA and military intelligence, has produced a leadership that neither understands nor especially values counterintelligence.

The FBI, on the other hand, has maintained a greater continuity of service in counterintelligence, which continues. The fundamental precept of the FBI is that the training and character that make a good criminal investigator also make a good counterintelligence officer. On this framework, in recent years the FBI has come to recognize that area knowledge, language skills, and a broad education enhance the effectiveness of counterintelligence officers. Though counterintelligence officers in the CIA and military intelligence recognize this, too, the support of their top leaders has been lukewarm at best.

Perhaps the most constructive way to accomplish this would be to appoint an officer who has spent the better part of his career in the FBI's experienced counterintelligence unit to head the Intelligence Division, and to give him the brief to expand and enhance counterintelligence programs. The effect on the other agencies would elevate counterintelligence without damaging the intelligence community as a whole.

To reiterate, what is needed is the appointment to leadership positions in the existing intelligence services of individuals who understand counterintelligence, and support from our government's political leadership for elevation of our counterintelligence defense to the high priority it requires.

The stakes are too high to permit intramural feuds, bureaucratic game-playing, or the meddling of witch-hunters, whatever their motives.

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